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Country for Indians west of the Mississippi. Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting a copy of a report made by Isaac McCoy upon the subject of the country reserved for the Indians west of the Mississippi.

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Recommended Citation

H.R. Doc. No. 172, 22nd Cong., 1st Sess. (1832)

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COUNTRY FOR INDIANS WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING

A copy of a report made by Isaac McCoy, upon the subject of the country reserved for the Indians west of the Mississippi.

MARCH 16, 1832.

Read, and laid upon the table.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,

March 16, 1832.

SIR: In compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 15th instant, I have the honor to transmit "a copy of a report made to the War Department by Isaac McCoy, upon the subject of the country reserved for the use of the Indians west of the Mississippi river."

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

LEW. CASS.

Honorable ANDREW STEVENSON,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MR. MCCOY'S REPORT.

Hon. LEWIS CASS,

Secretary of War:

SIR: It was the 6th of May last that I received my instructions from the Department of War. I immediately entered upon the services assigned me.

The line between the Cherokees and Arkansas Territory, 76 miles in length, is completed. This being a line drawn between two given points, had, necessarily, to be run twice. The Cherokee line has been extended on the line of the State of Missouri, 8 miles and 99 chains, to the north bank of

Elk river; thence, their most northern boundary is run 40 miles west; thence, their line is surveyed south 56 miles and 110 chains, (two polechain) to the south bank of Arkansas river; thence, the river has been surveyed, on its south bank, up 85 miles. From the line of Arkansas Territory, Arkansas river has been surveyed, on its north bank, up to Canadian river, and surveys extended up the latter, upon its north bank, 99 miles and 31 chains from the line of the Territory. Also, the line between the Indian territory and the State of Missouri has been surveyed, north of the Cherokee lands, 21 miles and 61 chains. Consequently, the eastern and southern boundaries of the Seneca lands have been surveyed.

These lines are marked plainly, in woodlands, each mile being numbered upon a witness tree, and Cherokee lands designated by the letters C. L., and Creek lands by C. r. k. L. In prairie lands, stones are set, or mounds erected, 80 poles apart, which is twice as frequent as I marked the surveys of last year, and, I believe, four times as frequent as lines previously run in these countries have been marked. On the surveys along the rivers, and on that between the Indian territory and the State of Missouri, north of the Cherokees, every fifth mile is distinctly marked and numbered, accompanied with suitable initials.

By means of more than half a dozen excursions, I have acquired a pretty thorough knowledge of the character of the country, not only as far as the aforementioned surveys extend, but, additionally, as far as the two assistant surveyors will be able to extend their work before the 25th of May next.

You are aware of the disappointment which I experienced in not obtaining men and means at Fort Gibson as I had expected, the reasons for which the commanding officer of that post has, no doubt, given you. I brought with me, from Missouri, a few necessary articles. From Cantonment Gibson, I obtained a portion of our supplies, an escort of 25 soldiers, attended by two officers, on a 33 days' exploring tour, and an escort of 8 soldiers, and an officer, on another tour of 11 days. With these exceptions, I found myself in that country without men and without means. The funds needed could not there be obtained, nor could steady, efficient hands, even had I possessed funds. Pack horses and other things necessary were costly. Obstacles originating in these circumstances, together with the sickness of the surveyors, and of several persons of their parties, have hindred us considerably in all our operations. I have, however, without loss of time in awaiting additional instructions from you in relation to supplies, pressed all our business forward with the utmost possible despatch.

Being required to meander Canadian river, and to explore those regions to a considerable distance west, and also to extend surveys of Creek lands and others, a similar distance westward, I was exceedingly anxious to accomplish one of these expeditions in the favorable season of the present year, and to perform the other tour in that of next year. This arrangement failed for want of an escort. I now propose to enter upon this remote work early in the next spring. In the mean time, both compasses will be employed around the Seneca lands, on the lines of the Creek lands, northeast of Arkansas river, and on other surveys along the line of the State of Missouri and westwardly.

I am happy in being able to say that my observations of this year have contributed materially to confirm the favorable opinion of the character and resources of this country, which had been formed by the observations of the three preceding years.

The map of this country, herewith submitted, embracing about 600 miles square, together with special plats, so far as actual surveys have been made, exhibits the situation of the several assignments of land. That of the Cherokees lies in the form of an L; the lower and eastern limb of which contains about 2,560,000 acres; the upper and western limb 4,440,000 acres, from which extends an outlet, west, of equal width to the extremity of the United States' territory.

The greater portion of the eastern part is woodland, and the greater portion of the western part, and with similar proportions, is prairie land. The prairie lands of the eastern part are generally fertile, and mostly so surrounded and interspersed with wood that most of it can conveniently be cultivated. There is also much rich wood-land on Arkansas, Neosho, and Illinois, and their tributaries. A portion of this timbered land is hilly, stony, and poor, yet interspersed with settlements of rich land. This tract is well watered. Arkansas is on the south, Neosho runs through it from north to south. Illinois, a beautiful river, about 55 yards wide, enters Arkansas 55 miles above their eastern line. To these navigable streams, is to be added the mouth of Verdigris as far up as is navigable for steamboats.

Water privileges for machinery are found at the falls of Verdigris, and on Ten Mile creek, Four Mile creek, Prior's creek, Rock creek, Cabin creek, and Upper creek. All these enter Neosho on the west, are suitable mill streams, and would operate upon machinery three-fourths of the year. About one-fourth of the year, water would be too scarce, excepting Verdigris, which is perpetual. East of Neosho are Spring creek, Saline creek, Flag creek, (about 30 yards wide) and its tributaries, and Honey creek. Emptying into Arkansas are Bayo Manard, Greenleaf creek, Illinois, with its valuable branches, and Salasaw. Most of these streams are perpetual. This tract also is generally well supplied with perennial springs of water.

Extensive beds of coal have already been discovered in various places. Several excellent salt springs exist on Illinois; two of which are successfully worked by Cherokees. Also numerous and excellent salt springs exist on Neosho; one of which a Cherokee has lately commenced working, and already manufactures 60 bushels of salt in 24 hours. Cherokees are also erecting salt works at two others of these springs.

On Neosho, as has been known for several years, rich lead ore appears abundant in one district. About 50 miles southeast of the above, we have recently discovered a mine of lead ore of equal value, which we have named Donelson's mine.

On this tract, which is considered the most valuable of any portion of equal dimensions in the Indian territory, reside the Cherokees of this country. This tract, I think, would have been sufficient, both in extent and resources, for a comfortable and prosperous home for *all the Cherokees*.

Their western lands are bounded on the south by Canadian river, and north by Arkansas river, and latitude 36°. North river and Deep river run through the centre, from west to east, the former of which is nearly equal to Canadian. All these have creeks emptying into them of suitable size for mills. About 18 miles above the mouth of Canadian river, there is a rapid in that stream about half a mile in length. At both the upper and the lower end of the rapid is a fall of three or four feet. The current between is strong. On North river, (or North fork) about five miles from its junction with Canadian, is a fall similar to one of the pitches mentioned above. Both of these rapids will prove to be excellent sites for machinery. Five

creeks of suitable size for mills, and one of them large enough to admit of mills upon its branches, enter Arkansas on the south, within the Cherokee lands. Mill streams in this section of country are not perpetual like most of those in the eastern district. We must calculate that about one-fourth part of the year they would be inefficient on account of low water. Spring water in this district is not so abundant as in the former; but wells may, no doubt, be dug with success in the few instances that may require it.

Good woodlands exist along the rivers and creeks; back from these the woodlands are, generally, of inferior soil, and some of them truly poor and stoney. The prairie lands are generally good, and are so well accommodated by groves, streaks of wood along the water courses, and ranges of timbered hills, that an immense population will here find the conveniencies for agriculture and its kindred pursuits.

Steamboat navigation terminates at the Cherokee western line of their lower district. Canadian river, Deep river, North river, Arkansas river, above the point just mentioned, Neosho river, and Illinois river, will be of use for small crafts in time of high water, but this is as much as we can hope in relation to them.

The Creek lands are bounded on the south by Arkansas river, and latitude 36°; by Cherokee lands and by others unappropriated on the east, and by those of the Osages on the north.

They had expected, and not without reason, to possess the country south as far as Canadian river. This clashing of their claims with those of the Cherokees, was noticed in my report to the department in 1828. This circumstance is much to be regretted, and is the occasion of much uneasiness on the part of the Creeks. It is, however, my duty to state, distinctly, that the terms of the Cherokee treaty cannot be complied with, without allowing them to run west between Arkansas and Canadian. They could, however, without the slightest loss to them, allow the Creeks a slip of 10 or 15 miles in width on the south bank of Arkansas, and take, in lieu thereof, a like quantity on Neosho, on their north, of lands unappropriated. I think that such an exchange with the Cherokees might be effected, and would here beg leave to renew my recommendation of the measure to your notice. Even this would not satisfy the Creeks, but it would materially diminish their difficulties.

It appears not to be easy for the Creeks to receive just impressions respecting either the extent or resources of their country. They speak of it as being limited to a small point in the fork of Arkansas and Verdigris. Whereas the country that I have been directed to survey for them will embrace about 8,000,000 of acres. Leaving out of the following calculations on account of waste lands, and for after considerations, one half, we notice only four millions of acres. A tract, sixteen miles by ten, will more than cover the whole population of Creeks now in this country, if we except a few on Canadian river, more than room for whom we shall find in this last described tract. We suppose, then, that they now occupy 102,400 acres. This is a fraction less than a thirty-ninth part of the four millions mentioned above. About 3,000 souls are here, and, including the Seminoles, we suppose that 21,000 souls may yet be on the east of Mississippi; in all, 24,000; one-eighth part of whom are here. When the whole of the remaining seven parts shall be located here, they will cover only eight parts of their country, leaving thirty-one parts unoccupied. This calculation embraces only *one-half* of their country, and does not require any settlement to be more dense than their present one.

I have been induced to trouble you with these calculations, because it leads to a *demonstration of facts*, and because the discontent of the Creeks has been cherished by the reports and opinions of, not ill disposed, but mistaken white men.

Should the matter rest according to the treaty with the Cherokees, they will possess the south bank of Arkansas above the eastern line of the Creeks, about 30 miles. Above that, the Creeks will own the river and its tributaries more than 100 miles; the main river passing obliquely across their tract. I have pretty thoroughly examined that portion of their country which lies north and east of Arkansas, and which embraces nearly 4,000,000 of acres.

Along the river are fine bottom lands, two or three miles wide, generally very fertile, mostly covered with a dense growth of wood, though some prairies occur; but they are equally fertile, and are well supplied with adjacent woodlands.

Red fork enters Arkansas on the south side, 77½ miles above the southeast corner of the Creek lands. About its entrance, there is but little bottom land on either river; and the country around, for some 5, 10, or 20 miles, is generally hilly, rocky, and poor, covered with small post and black-jack oak. Above this the Arkansas bottom lands are not so extensive as below.

Excellent prairie lands adjoin the bottom lands generally. The north side of Arkansas, up to the hill country, about the mouth of Red fork, is sandy, and almost destitute of stone. It is well supplied with perennial springs of water.

The residue of the Creek lands on the north side of Arkansas, are watered by Verdigris. Its branches approach within 15 or 20 miles of Arkansas, throughout the curve of the latter. The dividing ridge, which is prairie, will separate the settlements of the two rivers, in some places 10 or 15 miles, by lands uninhabitable on account of the absence of wood. The residue of this tract is happily supplied with numerous creeks of various sizes; along which are fertile bottom lands, in width generally proportioned to the magnitude of the stream; that on main Verdigris is about a mile wide. These are mostly well wooded, though some are prairie, invariably supplied by convenient woodlands.

Considerably the greater portion of the uplands is prairie, mostly rich, but some of them are poor and stony. Poor, rocky, timbered highlands, intercept the prairies. These groves are of various dimensions. I traveled, on one occasion, ten miles direct through these timbered lands, with very little prairie. There is too much prairie land; nevertheless, this district is so diversified with woodland and prairie, that it will support an immense population. Springs of water are here exceedingly rare, but there can be no doubt of obtaining water by digging, in the cases that may call for it. Limestone exists in places, but sandstone prevails generally.

I would here remark, once for all, that, excepting bottom lands, the whole of this Indian territory, say 600 miles north and south, and 200 miles east and west, is high and undulating, and certainly, in point of healthiness, is not surpassed by any district in the western country. The emigrants to this country have generally fallen into the error which has invariably attended the whites in forming colonies and new settlements. Instead of locating upon the higher and more healthy portions until they become inured to the place, and the lower lands are rendered more healthy by the grazing of stock, they settle on or near large bottom lands, covered with

dense forests and exuberant foliage, where a humid atmosphere, and the miasma of vegetable putrefaction, never fail to produce deleterious effects.

Steamboat navigation terminates about one mile below the Creek lands. I hope that arrangements will be made by which they will become possessed of about 2,000 acres of Cherokee lands, on the point between Arkansas and Verdigris, by which a valuable privilege of navigation, of about four miles on the Verdigris, would be allowed them, without depriving the Cherokees of the same privilege on the other side of the river.

Verdigris is 115 yards wide, generally deep and sluggish. At Fort Smith, Arkansas is 440 yards wide. A little above the mouth of Verdigris, it is only 220 yards wide. Its wider places above are equal to that mentioned below. Red fork, at the mouth, is 297 yards wide. These will be of use for small crafts only. Arkansas was so shallow over its wide bed of sand in November, that an effort to meander it above the mouth of Verdigris, by the help of canoes, failed; and we were compelled to resort to our horses for the transportation of our supplies. Its water is a little brackish. The water in Red fork, in November, was about 30 yards wide, and say a foot and a half deep, with a gentle current. It is deeply tinged with red, and so very salt as to be unfit for common use. Canadian, at the mouth, is 308 yards wide.

The tract which, by present arrangements, falls to the Senecas, is particularly good. Neosho river runs across the western end of it; and Elk river, a bold, perpetual stream, about 35 yards wide, runs through it, from east to west. Their tract is diversified with woodland and prairie: they have an abundance of wood, and first rate soil. The bottom lands on the river are excellent. Withal, their land is well supplied with, not only the waters of those two limpid streams, but, also, with perpetual springs.

Between the Cherokees and Senecas on the south, and the parallel of the southern line of the Osages on the north, is a tract equal to about 40 miles by 31. Neosho runs through it from north to south. West of Neosho is is too much prairie, mostly rich, however, and so furnished with the wood of Cabin creek and its branches, and with timbered hills, and the wood adjoining Neosho, and on small creeks running into it, that it will admit of pretty good settlements over it.

On the east of Neosho, a portion adjoining the river is hilly, stony, and poor, well timbered and well watered. Taken in connexion with intervening prairies and bottom lands, this is a fine country. Besides two creeks, of a size for mills, and some smaller ones emptying into Neosho, East river, about 60 yards wide, and nearly equal to the main branch of Neosho, comes in from the east.

The same kind of good country, of woodland and prairie, with some large creeks, continues northwardly between the Osage lands and Missouri, for the distance of about 25 miles. The quantity of wood then diminishes, and the quantity of prairie increases, until we reach Osage river. Near Neosho, however, and on several good creeks, is woodland sufficient for extensive settlements. The soil here is almost invariably rich. South of East river, coarse white flint stone generally prevails, until within 10 or 15 miles of Arkansas, when the poor wooded hills disclose the coarse red sand stone, which, almost universally, prevails westwardly.

Neosho runs along the eastern end of the Osage lands, which are 50 miles wide. Along this river, there is consequently good country, embracing, in a good degree, wood, water, and soil. Westwardly, the soil is almost inva-

riably good. Wood exists on La Bete creek sufficient for fine settlements; this creek runs almost across their land from northwest to southeast: nevertheless, there is too much prairie for the distance of about 20 miles west of the woodlands of Neosho. We then have reached the waters of Verdigris, which, with numerous creeks, suitable for mills, and their branches, water those lands for about 30 miles west. This country has wood sufficient on the watercourses, and on timbered, poor, stony hills, for a fine settlement over it generally.

Farther west, the dividing land between these waters and Arkansas is prairie, and must occasion a vacancy without settlement of about 10 or 15 miles. Then come the waters of a large creek called Little Neosho, the Arkansas, and some tributaries. On these we again find good country for settlement.

In this country, water courses become low in summer. Machinery on them would generally stand still a fourth of the year. Spring water is rare. Wells, I presume, could be dug with success. This country is generally supplied with limestone, except on the poor timbered hills, where we find sandstone.

Between the Osage lands and those of the Shawnees and Kansas, is a tract of unappropriated lands about 65 miles in width, extending west from the State of Missouri. Within this tract, from about 100 to 140 miles from the State, are the sources of Neosho and Osage rivers. Farther west, is Little Arkansas, and other smaller streams, and the main Arkansas. This is generally a limestone country, possessing a remarkably rich soil. Wood is more scarce than in the country further south. Here it seldom occurs upon uplands, but is limited, almost wholly, to low grounds; consequently, this country is only streaked with timber: it is, however, sufficient for a considerable population. The proportion of wood is greater upon the waters of Osage river than upon those of Neosho.

For a general description of the country, still further north, and nearly to the waters of the great Platte river, I beg leave to refer to my report of surveys made last year. On this paper I have said little of lands which I have not, to some extent, explored. I have been further south than is here reported, yet I deem it unnecessary here to remark upon the extensive and excellent country of the Choctaws, between great Red river on the south, and Arkansas and Canadian on the north.

From what I have seen, and pretty authentic information respecting what I have not seen, I am persuaded that a thorough examination must dispel every doubt which the most scrupulous could possibly feel, of its being more than adequate to all the purposes desired in the settlement of the Indians therein.

No mistake could easily be greater than a supposition that, were all the Indians on this side of the Rocky mountains located within this territory, say 600 miles long by 200 miles wide, they would be crowded to their inconvenience. Let the fact be illustrated by reference to the State of Ohio. The whole number of Indians on this side of the Rocky mountains is estimated to be 213,000, many of whom, upon the sources of the Mississippi, high up on Missouri, and near to the mountains, we could not hope to bring into this territory. The number, which claims our attention in this matter, is less than 200,000. Here we have a number equal to only about one-fifth of the population of Ohio, and a territory full three times as large as Ohio to place them in. The State of Ohio is not filled. Were four-fifths of its

present inhabitants removed, and the remaining fifth scattered over the States of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, it would be impossible to suppose that this fifth part would be crowded to their inconvenience.

Objections on account of the scarcity of wood in this country, may also find an appropriate response in a reference to the above. We admit a much greater portion of this country is prairie than is desirable, and consequently the proportion of woodland is too small. But we do not mean by this, that the defect is so great, that the country is inadequate to the purposes contemplated. What can be our conceptions of the country where, if one-fifth part of the population of Ohio were scattered over a tract equal to the three States mentioned above, we should fear that the scarcity of timber would leave them miserable! To these considerations, should be added that of the fact that coal is abundant throughout this territory, and also stone for the purposes of fencing and building, when the improved state of society shall lead to the adoption of such a mode. It might also be well to reflect that, heretofore, the scattered condition of the Indians has proved one of the prolific causes of their decline. Extremes should be avoided; nevertheless, I think that the frontier settlements of our country speak the fact, that a population may be too sparse to be favorable to improvement in society.

I would here ask leave to say, that I am decidedly of opinion that it would have been better for the several tribes now here, if, excepting two or three of them, *less land* had been assigned to them.

The Creeks and Cherokees are greatly in advance of other Indians of this country in civilization; (I do not speak of the Chóctaws.) Their houses and fences are similar to those of new settlers among the whites. Their fields are generally larger, their stocks of cattle greater, and the furniture in their houses less, in proportion to numbers, than we will generally find among whites on the frontiers. The most remote settlement of Creeks consists of five houses. I was there told the other day, that those five houses would have at least 5,000 bushels of corn to sell, over and above what they would need for their own use. They informed me that, including all their settlements, they had more than 20,000 bushels of corn to sell, besides what they need for themselves.

In point of property and comfort, the Cherokees are, I think, generally in advance of the Creeks. Both possess stocks of hogs, sheep and fowls. They spin and weave. They are erecting a saw and grist mill at the falls of Verdigris, within the Cherokee country. The disposition of both tribes to improve, by religious and literary instructions, is very pleasing. The Cherokees have long had a few successful school establishments among them, cherished by the benevolence of Christians, and aided by the patronage of our Government. Recently, the Creeks determined to have a school among them. They united, and erected with their own hands, a log building, with two apartments, the whole 30 feet long and 16 feet wide, for the residence of a teacher. They will also soon complete a school house. They have invited an approved well known gentleman, who has successfully labored for the benefit of the Indians in this country for ten years, to be their teacher. He has generously accepted their invitation, and is now there under auspicious circumstances of usefulness.

A pious Creek youth, who spent a month's vacation of the Union Mission school among his people, generously employed it in teaching. His little school house, which would contain only about 30, was soon filled with scholars, and about an equal number that came, were sent back for want of room.

The Osages are poor and miserable. About 1,500 reside on Verdigris, upon the Creek lands, about 20 families on Neosho, on the Cherokee lands. The Quapaws, who are a branch of the same people, in number about 400 souls, are within the Territory of Arkansas. These bands deprecate their removal to their own lands to the north. As they must eventually remove thither, I would respectfully suggest the inquiry, whether motives of humanity do not require that it be done as soon as practicable. Little improvement in civilization among them can be hoped for in their present unsettled state. They are in a most pitiable condition! The Verdigris band, last winter, were impelled, by their pinching necessities, to kill hogs and cattle of the Creeks and others, to the value of about the amount of their annuity of this year. Game near them is scarce. They have to go more than 100 miles west, before they find Buffalo. There they are in continual dread of the Pawnees, by whom they are sometimes driven back empty.

Among them is nothing peculiar to form a barrier to their improvement. The course which has heretofore been pursued in relation to the two agriculturists furnished them by the United States, has not benefited them in the least. I insinuate no complaint against the men, but the policy was merely to set an example before the Indians. This policy, as might have been expected, was unsuccessful.

I beg leave respectfully to recommend that they be suitably and permanently located according to the partialities of the several bands, and that large common fields of prairie land be fenced and ploughed for them, and afterwards some assistance afforded them in farming utensils and live stock. Here I would respectfully recommend that, in all instances in which live stock is given to Indians in a savage state, the agent of the tribe exercise such control over it, that they shall not be allowed to destroy it, or any part of it, without his consent. Stock furnished Indians before they have fences to preserve their crops, will be destroyed by them, as has more than once been the case with the Kanzas.

Fields could be made for them without additional cost to the United States. Twelve hundred dollars, the compensation, I believe, of the agriculturists for one year, would pay for making a good fence around three different fields, including, in the whole, 150 acres, and for ploughing them. The first year's provision would greatly improve their condition, and in this way they would soon become comfortably situated. We have more than theory or conjecture to satisfy us that such a course would be highly acceptable to the Osages. The twenty families which reside on Neosho, have been collected by a benevolent gentleman, who, through persuasion, example, and a little aid for their encouragement, has, with his associates, prevailed on them to commence a promising course of agriculture. They begin to work with their own hands, make fences, plough land, and keep cattle and hogs. In these advances towards better things, their chief and his son take the lead.

The Pawnees and others, who roam in the prairies, are a great annoyance to the settlers in this Indian territory. The last summer, they drove a party of Osages back from a hunting excursion with the loss of one man, and in October they killed two men and a woman of the Delawares, who were hunting upon nearly the same ground. One woman and her child escaped, with whom I conversed two days after she reached the Creek settlement.

While we might suppose that agricultural pursuits would sooner be adopted by the tribes, if game be scarce near home, and the enemy forbid them

to go far abroad, we may nevertheless allow it to be very desirable that peace should surround all their borders. I ask to be indulged in repeating, respectfully, an opinion I was allowed to express in 1828, relative to this subject. The Indians of these prairies are not half so resolute and obstinate as those in the region of the lakes. Nevertheless, there they are brought under the control of the United States' authorities, and an offender can be apprehended hundred of miles within the forest, and brought to trial. Hitherto the intercourse between those prairie Indians and citizens of the United States, and with *our* Indians, as we may term them, has been little else than a series of mutual intrigues, and acts of injury upon each other's property and persons. Could we form an acquaintance with them, open a trade with them, and allow them to receive a small annuity of such presents as would suit them, they would soon discover their interest in being at peace with all on this side of them. Should some of the more refractory commit depredations which would require chastisement, and flee from justice, others of the tribe could be apprehended and detained as hostages until the real offenders were delivered up. Offenders who might flee into the Mexican territories, whither our troops could not consistently follow them, would be brought back to us by their own people.

With due respect, I ask leave to renew my suggestion relative to the early extinguishment of the title of the Pawnees, Omahas, and others, in the northern part of what we call the Indian territory, to so much country as may be requisite in the prosecution of the designs of the Government. At present, this could be effected with ease to us, and with profit to them. They would derive some immediate benefits at our hands, and be led to expect others; all which, involving their interests, would incline them to peace, while we should have the satisfaction to find them within reach of the hand of help which Government is extending to others.

Nine Shawnees and fifteen Delawares, died the past summer and fall, of the small pox. The disease was arrested by vaccination, and the vigilance of the Indians, and of their agents and other friends. Many of the Osages have submitted to vaccination. Of the dreadful havoc which this scourge of man has made among the Pawnees, you have been informed through the proper medium. I notice it here as a weighty argument in favor of speedily bringing those people into a more intimate connexion with us, as suggested above, in relation to the purchase of their lands, &c. While humanity shudders at the sight of more than 3000 human carcasses cast upon the open field in the space of a few days, (one half of the whole population,) it pleads with energy, that the desperate survivors should be brought into such a wardship of the United States, as was that which saved the Shawnees and Delawares.

I cannot too warmly express my predilection in favor of the scheme which, if I mistake not, came within the designs of the late Secretary of War, of reserving a tract 30 or 40 miles square, in a central part of the territory, for a common ground, on which individuals of any tribe might settle; and within which, would eventually be located their seat of government. This central portion is, at this time, unappropriated.

The importance of the subject must be my apology for most earnestly recommending to your consideration the propriety of bringing together in council, as early as practicable, delegates from every tribe within the Indian territory, including the Pawnees and Omahas. The objects of this meeting would be, to explain to them the nature of the relation which, hereafter,

they would be required to sustain one to another, to elicit mutual pledges of peace, and to originate measures suited to their present condition, which would lead to the rudiments of a territorial compact and government. Such a meeting would, I think, be acceptable to every tribe, nor can I feel a doubt of its expediency.

With great deference, I ask leave to solicit your attention to the subject of creating such a superintendency of Indian affairs within the Indian territory, as, extending to all tribes within it, should tend to establish that union which is essential to their future prosperity. It would be hoped, that this superintendency would be adapted to the primary state of society, and with a view to their future organization. Connected with this might be the inquiry, whether the agency system within the territory, might not be gradually modified, so as better to promote the designs of Government than it does at present. Its operations, at present, cherish too much the distinct and independent interests of the tribes.

By adopting measures to develope, to the various tribes, the relations which they are to bear to each other, and the prospect of better days, embraced in the scheme of uniting them in one body politic, and constituting them an integral part of the community of the United States, difficulties in relation to the particular limits of the several tribes would vanish. Every tribe possessing more land than its wants would require, and which could not be sold for any thing else, would be happy to have others settle near them. The merchant would desire to multiply his neighbors to enable him to extend his sales, and the owner of a mill would be pleased with the increase of his customers.

The state of society, settling down into a regular Territorial Government, would, on its arrival at that state, allow of no greater partiality for metes and bounds of a common character, than is felt in one of our States or Territories for the lines of counties.

Could the spirit of uniting in one territory be instilled into them, I am persuaded that hopes unknown before would animate every tribe, and lead to virtue, industry, and enterprize. The better informed, and those in more comfortable condition, would have the ascendancy among their less fortunate brethren, while the latter would profit by the talents and enterprize of the former.

When I have been so happy as to gain the attention of an Indian to this subject, explained with a map of this country spread before him, it has invariably been the case, from the Ottawa of lake Michigan to the more refined Indian of the south, that his feelings appeared to become enlisted in approbation of the plan, and hope seemed to spring up in his soul.

The openings for the formation of establishments for the instruction of the Indians in this territory in literature, in religion, and, in a word, in whatever is calculated to promote their happiness in this world, or to prepare them for the next, are uncommonly inviting. In these remarks, I embrace all, from the Choctaws on the south to the Omahas and Ottoes on the north. Particulars upon this subject I shall reserve for a more appropriate place in a subsequent communication; asking only to be indulged here in saying, that Government, having entered upon the most judicious and humane policy ever conceived by a civilized power in relation to the aborigines of our country, other facts combine to declare, in language too distinct to be misunderstood, that the time has arrived when all who wish them well, may avail themselves of favorable opportunities of doing them good. I am not enthusiastic, but, from conclusions rationally drawn, believe, that,

should the scheme now entered upon by our country be steadily followed up, the epoch will be calendared for posterity as the crisis of Indian degradation and decline, and as the date of their prosperity.

I have the honor to be,

Most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

ISAAC McCOY, *Surveyor, &c.*

SHAWNEE AGENCY,

Missouri river, Feb. 1, 1832.

Extracts from report of Isaac McCoy to the honorable Secretary of War, of January 31, 1831—Delawares.

The character of the country of the Delawares, (north of Kansas river,) is much the same as that of the country south of Kansas river. It may be denominated elevated and rolling, though not hilly, free from swamps, and the soil exceedingly fertile, with scarcely an exception of any spot. The uplands are generally, though not universally, smooth prairie, destitute of wood. All the water courses, from the largest down to the smallest, are wooded. The quantity of timber in the vicinity of the Missouri and Kansas rivers, is considerable. The quantity diminishes as we go westwardly, and the quality of the timber becomes less valuable. The quantity of land designed for the residence of the Delawares, equals about 38 miles square. This contains wood sufficient to admit a considerable population over the whole of it. This tract is also well supplied with perennial springs of water, and with streams suitable for mills and other water works. Limestone and sandstone, generally the former, are alternately deposited over the country much as we find them further south, "for the convenience and not the annoyance of the agriculturalist."

We found a valuable bed of coal in the vicinity of Cantonment Leavenworth, and another further up Missouri. We discovered iron ore in several places.

About 138 miles west of the State of Missouri, we entered a region of ferruginous or iron looking sandstone, which continued westward about 25 miles. These rocks sometimes form cliffs on hill sides; oftener they appear in isolated heaps, as if they had been carried thither by the hands of man, or had risen out of the earth. The rocks are shelly, exhibiting an appearance similar to volcanic effects. Some would seem to have been fused, when broken, resembling cast iron.

We crossed the Republican river 148 miles west of the State of Missouri. There, and further west, glauber salts is deposited in the sand beaches and on banks of water courses, perceptible to the naked eye and to the taste; the quantity increasing as we go westwardly.

West of Republican river, are many running streams of salt water. The sand beaches of Solomon river and many smaller streams, are whitened with a crystallization of common salt. The same is found on the surface of the earth at places frequented by animals which relish salt.

About 200 miles west of Missouri, is a salt spring on a mound, that has a level on the summit of 40 yards in diameter. The mound is 30 feet high from its base, but, being surrounded by a vale, its summit rises but little above

the surrounding country. This is a great natural curiosity, which among the Kansas, gives name to Solomon river. [A particular description of it is omitted in these extracts.] Ancient tumuli, so common in the western country, were not perceived by us very far west of the State of Missouri. A little over a mile back of Cantonment Leavenworth, our notice was particularly attracted to the imposing situation of eight mounds or accumulations of earth and stones, on a hill commanding an extensive and interesting view of the surrounding country.

The mounds are from five to six yards in diameter at the base. Six of them are partly in a direct line, and at equal distances along the top of the ridge, about 17 yards asunder, from center to center. On each side of the third mound, from the northeast end of the line, is another, at about the same distance. Unbroken stones have been placed circularly, as though a building had been commenced; the space within, is filled with earth. We examined one, and found, at the depth of between two and three feet, charcoal, burnt earth, burnt stone, and human bones that had been scorched with fire. The bones were so much decayed, that it could scarcely be distinguished to what part of the human body they belonged. We discovered two skulls, one of which had been that of an infant. In that country we frequently discovered heaps of stone and of earth, which had been formed in covering the dead. The mounds of which I am speaking, were not mere burying places, because the bodies had been burned. The burning had not been intended to reduce them to ashes, because this had not been done. I suppose that they had been "high places," at which religious worship had been performed, agreeably to ancient heathenish custom. Human sacrifices had been offered on them, or rather *in* them, for they had been a kind of kiln or furnace, the wall of which was stone. I should think that the victim had been placed within upon a wooden scaffold, or among a pile of combustible matter. The corpses, when partly consumed, had lastly been covered with earth, or with grass and wood, and earth together.

About 140 miles west of the State of Missouri, the country begins to assume a more level face. About this place, also, commences the growth of a short soft grass on the prairies, which prevails westwardly; none of which, is found in Missouri, Illinois, or Indiana. I presume that this circumstance has led some travellers into the mistaken supposition that they were passing over poor land. The soil, as far west as we extended our survey, (210 miles,) is almost invariably rich. The uplands are somewhat inferior to those nearer to the State of Missouri. The bottom lands of Solomon river, which are two or three miles wide, mostly prairie, and the bottom lands of other smaller streams, are of first rate quality.

The quantity of stone also diminishes as we proceed westwardly. Sixty or seventy miles of the western portion of our journey, we occasionally passed over a region of some six or ten miles of sandstone, of limestone, or, of no stone at all.

Kansas river (pronounced by the natives Kaw-saw,) parts off in three principal streams. Blue river, the mouth of which is about 95 miles west of the State of Missouri, is there 120 yards wide. Where our line crossed it about thirty miles to the north, it was 110 yards wide. Its waters are transparent, having passed through an elevated limestone country.

Republican river, or more properly, and as the usual Kansas name signifies, Pawnee river, is a northern branch coming in from near the mountains,

little larger than Blue river. It runs over a bed of sand, and its waters are muddy like those of Missouri. Smoky Hill river is about equal in size to the Republican, with which it unites about 20 miles above the mouth of Blue river. The Indians say that its sources are nearer the mountains than those of Republican, from observation, as far as I have been, I should judge differently. Republican receives no large tributaries for a long distance from its mouth, while Smoky Hill receives Deep creek, about 30 yards wide; Solomon river, 90 yards wide; and Saline river, about 60 yards wide; all within the distance of 60 miles from its junction with the Republican. Smoky Hill is also a muddy river, running over a bed of sandstone. Its waters are so impregnated with salt as to be disagreeable for common use. Further west, than about 140 miles west from the State of Missouri, the proportion of wood upon those larger water courses becomes less than upon smaller. This is accounted for by the sandyness of their shores, which admits the annual fires to become more destructive to the timber, than on a different soil.

I beg leave, sir, to state distinctly that I am confirmed in an opinion, often expressed, that the country under consideration may be considered favorable for settlement the distance, on an average, of 200 miles west of the State of Missouri and Territory of Arkansas. Water, wood, soil and stone, are such as to warrant this conclusion.

I beg indulgence further, to suggest the inquiry whether it would not be advisable to assign to the several small bands only that amount of country which, on account of their numbers, and in view of their future prosperity and increase, would be really necessary. To me, I would say respectfully, it appears, that if one-fourth part only of the Delaware country had been assigned to them, it would have been better both for them and for the United States. I cannot perhaps better communicate my opinion of the character of the country, embracing the items of wood, water and soil, than by making this statement.

From the time that my express carried information to the Delawares that I was about to survey their lands, they manifested a strong inclination to get on to it. They immediately commenced preparations for removal. It was very desirable to the Government agents to gratify them, but serious obstacles presented themselves from want of an appropriation to carry into effect the articles of the treaty of 1829, which provide for their removal at the cost of the United States. In this unhappy delay, they unhesitatingly commenced their emigration on their limited resources. Colonel William Anderson, their principal chief, with nearly 100 souls, were in their new country when I called to see them on my way from the west. The residue of the tribe were on the road thither, with the exception of a few who had gone on hunting excursions, and who were expected to arrive in the spring.

Those who have reached their new country, are very well pleased. Anderson assured me that he felt peculiar gratification that now, in his old age, he had the pleasure, before his death, of seeing his people settled in their *own country*, where they were to remain; a country with which they were well pleased.

The fact that these poor people were too anxious to get into their new country to allow time for Government to furnish them with that assistance which had been secured to them by treaty, and that they have gone thither upon their own resources, in doing which they have encountered much

more inconvenience than could have occurred with the assistance they had expected, *forms the best comment upon the suitableness of that country for the permanent residence of the Indians.*

The Shawnees, whose lands adjoin those of the Delawares, are improving in agriculture and kindred arts, very promisingly.

Their neat log cabins, fields, &c. appear little inferior to most new settlements of white people upon our frontiers.